

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A Method configured to control advertising messages directed at a user comprising:
 - setting a filter to control advertisements directed at a user;
 - receiving advertisements based on the filter setting, at the user's personal device;
 - accepting the advertisements at the user's personal device; and
 - providing the user with rewards for accepting the advertisements.
2. An Method configured to control advertisement messages directed at a user of the search engine comprising:
 - permitting a user to login to an internet service;
 - creating a user profile containing filter criteria;
 - reading the filter criteria from the user's profile;
 - providing third party advertisements to the user based on the filter criteria;
 - determining if the user reviewed the third party's advertisement message; and
 - providing the user with a reward if the user reviewed the third party's advertisement message.
3. The Method of claim 2 wherein a user profile is created by a registered user.
4. The Method of claim 2 wherein the filter criteria from a user profile comprises demographic profile information about the user provided by the user.
5. The Method of claim 4 wherein the demographic profile information comprises static attributes.
6. The Method of claim 5 wherein static attributes comprises gender, income, profession, and family status.
7. The Method of claim 4 wherein the demographic profile information comprises dynamic attributes.
8. The Method of claim 7 wherein the dynamic attributes comprises the users location, local time, and local weather.
9. The Method of claim 7 wherein the dynamic attributes comprises whether the user is on work or personal time.

10. The Method of claim 2 wherein the filter criteria from a user profile comprises subjects of interest to the user.
11. The Method of claim 10 wherein the subjects of interest are selected by the user from a list.
12. The Method of claim 10 wherein the subjects of interest are entered directly by the user.
13. The Method of claim 2 wherein the filter criteria from a user comprises a reward threshold.
14. The Method of claim 13 wherein the reward threshold comprises a minimum level of compensation necessary for the user to accept a message.
15. The Method of claim 14 wherein the compensation is cash.
16. The Method of claim 14 wherein the compensation is tokens redeemable for goods or services.
17. The Method of claim 14 wherein the reward threshold can be adjusted by the user for different media in which the message is delivered.
18. The Method of claim 17 wherein different media comprises plain text, recorded voice, live voice, graphics, streaming video, and live video.
19. The Method of claim 13 wherein the reward threshold can be adjusted by the user based on the length of the message.
20. The Method of claim 13 wherein the reward threshold can be adjusted by the user based on the personal device receiving the messages.
21. The Method of claim 20 wherein the personal device comprises a home computer, a pager, a PDA, and telephone.
22. The Method of claim 2 wherein the filter criteria from a user comprises the time of day acceptable for sending messages to the user.
23. The Method of claim 2 wherein the filter criteria from a user comprises allowing the user to provide the maximum number of message within a designated time frame.

24. The Method of claim 23 wherein the designated time frame comprises one day.
25. The Method of claim 23 wherein the designated time frame comprises one week.
26. The Method of claim 2 wherein the third party comprises a merchant.
27. The Method of claim 2 wherein sending a message to the user based on the filter criteria comprises determining what messages to send to the user.
28. The Method of claim 2 wherein sending a message to the user based on the filter criteria comprises determining when to send messages to the user.
29. The Method of claim 2 wherein sending a message to the user based on the filter criteria comprises determining the frequency acceptable to the user for receiving messages.
30. The Method of claim 2 wherein sending a message to the user comprises sending a plurality of messages to the user.
31. The Method of claim 2 wherein sending a message to the user comprises providing the user with a list of links in response to the user's search criteria where the links to sites offering the highest reward value will be listed first in the search results.
32. The Method of claim 2 wherein determining if the user accepted the third party's advertisement message comprises determining if the third party's advertisement message was displayed on the user's screen.
33. The Method of claim 2 wherein determining if the user accepted the third party's advertisement message comprises determining if the third party's advertisement message was read by the user.
34. The Method of claim 2 wherein determining if the user accepted the third party's advertisement message comprises determining if the user visited a third party's site.
35. A method wherein a third party selects user's of a search engine to receive the third party's messages comprising:
 - retrieving user profiles;
 - comparing user profiles with criteria defined by the third party; and
 - sending messages to users matching the third party's criteria.

36. The method of claim 35 wherein a user profile comprises a record of information for a specific user.

37. The method of claim 36 wherein the information comprises user demographic profile information about the user provided by the user.

38. The method of claim 36 wherein the information comprises subjects of interest to the user.

39. The method of claim 36 wherein the information comprises a reward threshold.

40. The method of claim 36 wherein the information comprises the time of day acceptable for sending messages to the user.

41. The method of claim 36 wherein the information comprises the maximum number of message within a designated time frame which the user will accept from a merchant.

42. The method of claim 35 wherein the messages comprise advertising messages.

43. The method of claim 35 wherein the third party is a merchant.

44. A method comprising verifying whether or not an Internet operation is being attempted by a human being or an automated process by using a quiz process other than an Internet site registration process that requires user interaction, the quiz process utilizing a display format that cannot be easily recognized or read by a machine or automated process.

45. The method of claim 44 wherein the quiz process is used in conjunction with an Internet service configured to provide information to a user of the service in ranked order according to a user profile created by the user.

46. The method of claim 2 wherein determining if the user reviewed the advertisement comprises presenting a quiz to the user.

47. The method of claim 46 wherein the quiz is used to differentiate between human users and automated computer processes.

48. A method wherein a quiz for determining if a user is a human user or an automated respondent comprising inviting a user to respond to a question and verifying the user's response.

49. A method comprising:

presenting a quiz to a user;
advising the user of the acceptable manner of response to the quiz;
receiving the user's response to the quiz; and
determining if the user is a human or an automated respondent based on the user's response.

50. The method of claim 49 wherein the quiz to a user is a question presented to a user.

51. The method of claim 49 wherein there are a plurality of formats for presenting the quiz to the user.

52. The method of claim 51 wherein the quiz may be presented in one of a plurality of formats.

53. The method of claim 51 wherein the quiz may be presented in a combination of the plurality of formats.

54. The method of claim 51 comprising a quiz question presented in a text format.

55. The method of claim 51 comprising a quiz question presented in a graphical image format.

56. The method of claim 51 comprising a quiz presented in an audio format.

57. The method of claim 56 wherein the quiz in the audio format further comprises requiring the user to identify attributes of the audio format.

58. The method of claim 57 wherein requiring the user to identify attributes of the audio format comprises requiring the user to determine the gender of a person providing a voice delivered in the audio format.

59. The method of claim 57 wherein requiring the user to identify attributes of the audio format comprises requiring the user to determine the age of a person providing a voice delivered in the audio format.

60. The method of claim 51 wherein the format for presenting the quiz comprises requiring the user to utilize one of their five senses individually or in combination to respond to the quiz.

61. The method of claim 60 wherein the one of their five senses comprises the user's sense of smell.
62. The method of claim 61 wherein the user utilizing their sense of smell to respond to the quiz comprises presenting a smell to a user and asking the user to respond to a question regarding the smell.
63. The method of claim 62 wherein the question comprises identifying the smell.
64. The method of claim 62 wherein the question comprises identifying characteristics of the smell.
65. The method of claim 60 wherein the one of their five senses comprises the user's sense of touch.
66. The method of claim 60 wherein the one of their five senses comprises the user's sense of taste.
67. The method of claim 51 wherein the format comprises a quiz given over a background of other voices speaking.
68. The method of claim 67 wherein a quiz given over a background of other voices comprises requiring the user to identify the question presented.
69. The method of claim 51 wherein the format comprises presenting the user with a plurality of quizzes and instructing the user to respond to the quiz which has a distinctive characteristic.
70. The method of claim 69 wherein the quiz which has a distinctive characteristic comprises the user determining which of the plurality of quizzes is presented in a specific type of voice.
71. The method of claim 70 where the specific type of voice is a singing voice.
72. The method of claim 51 wherein the format comprises a ransom quiz.
73. The method of claim 72 wherein the ransom quiz comprises the user:
 - listening to different words delivered in cadence;
 - differentiating meaningful words from buffer words;
 - combining the meaningful words into a question; and

responding to the question.

74. The method of claim 51 wherein the format comprises a quiz given via video using a combination of sounds and images.

75. The method of claim 51 wherein the format comprises asking the nature of a scene described in the medium used to present the quiz.

76. The method of claim 75 wherein the medium comprises graphical images, audio, video, sense of smell, sense of touch, and sense of taste.

77. The method of claim 51 wherein there are a plurality of ways in which the user may enter the response.

78. The method of claim 77 wherein one of a plurality of ways in which the user may enter the response is through a keyboard entry.

79. The method of claim 77 wherein one of a plurality of ways in which the user may enter the response is through an audio response.

80. The method of claim 77 wherein one of a plurality of ways in which the user may enter the response is through a video response.

81. The method of claim 77 wherein one of a plurality of ways in which the user may enter the response is through an entry made with a mouse.

82. The method of claim 51 wherein the quiz comprises a question integrated into an advertisement.

83. The method of claim 82 wherein the format of the advertisement comprises a text message, a graphical image, an audio message, a video message, a message requiring a user to utilize the user's sense of smell, a message requiring the user to utilize the user's sense of taste, a message requiring a the user to utilize the user's sense of touch, or any combination thereof.

84. The method of claim 51 wherein the quiz comprises questions and answers tailored to a specific user based on the user's profile.

85. The method of claim 84 wherein the user profile comprises demographic information provided by the user.

86. The method of claim 49 wherein the presenting a quiz to a user comprises determining the frequency with which a user is a quiz based on the user's history of responses to past quizzes.

87. A computer readable medium storing a sequence of instructions that, when executed by a machine, cause the machine to:

- set a filter to control advertisements directed at a user;
- receive advertisements based on the filter setting, at the user's personal device;
- accept the advertisements at the user's personal device; and
- provide the user with rewards for accepting the advertisements.

88. A computer readable medium storing a sequence of instructions that, when executed by a machine, cause the machine to:

- present a quiz to a user;
- advise the user of the acceptable manner of response to the quiz;
- receive the user's response to the quiz; and
- determine if the user is a human or an automated respondent based on the user's response.